# SAILOR WITH BANJO

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TORONTO

# SAILOR WITH BANJO

*ENTERTAINMENT*
*IN RHYME AND SONG*

BY
HAMISH MACLAREN

NEW EDITION
WITH A SECTION OF
INLAND LYRICS

*New York*
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1930

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TO

A HIGHLAND SEAFARER
BESIDE THE NILE

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# PART I

## EARLY EVENING IN THE NINE BELLS TAVERN

There were three mariners did to a tavern come
For singing, and dancing, and the best Jamaica rum
Mellow in a hogshead, English ale and Scotch:
Their ship had slipped her moorings in the morning watch.

And these three mariners did in a tavern dance—
With toorelaye, toorelaye, give us half a chance!
Give us half a chance girls—and loud did they sing
Toorelaye, toorelaye, for time's on the wing!

Their ship had slipped her moorings, but sure, the truth is this,
They'd walked their chalks together, and freely now would kiss
The young golden barmaid of great charm, whose lips
Long ere this evening had held sailors from their ships.

Now, of these three mariners within this tavern cool,
One is Tom the Rambler that never went to school,
Young Tom the Rambler that never said his prayers,
A-playing of these old bold out-of-date airs:

Tum-ti Reuben Ranzo and ti tum-ti Sally Brown,
Toorelaye Susannah with her ringlets falling down!
They calls me Hanging Johnnie and I'm bound for Mobile Bay—
Lowlands, lowlands, toorelaye away!

Sing, boys, sing and dance, for one day soon
We'll go no more a-roving by the light of the moon!
And he up'd with his banjo and he plink plonk played,
I'll go no more a-roving with you fair maid.

And he sang them a song of the fishes of the sea,
Of the oak, and the ash, and the bonnie birk tree;
And he played Red River Valley and the Yankee Skipper's liver—
With an ullaboola, ullaboola, ilo ilo ullaboola
Ilo ilo ullaboola Shenandoah River!

Now of this Tom the Rambler, it may as well be told,
A fool he is, a pretty fool, that nohow cannot hold
Money in his pocket for a single night ashore,
For his love will have it off him and he'll never see her more—

Until another nightfall, when she'll meet him at the inn
Looking a proper lady with her saucy tilted chin:
At which he'll borrow dollars for to buy a ring of pearls—
Toorelaye, toorelaye, they'll ruin him, the girls!

## TOM THE RAMBLER

The world over,
When he's had money
He's lain in clover
And sipped the honey:
Like a bee flying
From bloom to bloom
And later lying
Flushed, in the gloom
Of scented chambers,
Half asleep,
Where the rose clambers
And ivies creep—

Which is only his flowery
Talk: it means
He's been blind in the Bowery
And at New Orleans:
His money-bags undone
And his wits sent a-wing
In Hull or London
By a fair young thing.
From 'Frisco to Cadiz
He's lost a score of ships
For mulatto ladies
That swing mellow hips,
Or with one litre
Of vermouth swallowed,
A dark signorita
He's followed, followed.
And he's been bitten,
Tho' he'd say it was lies,
By a little French kitten
Whose blue-black eyes
And her lips pouting cherries
Were hollow charms;
While his ship by the Skerries
Lay sounding fog alarums.
Tom, Tom the Joker,
Cares no jot:
He'd ship as a stoker
As soon as not.
But what he delights in
Most of all
Is to have his nights in
Some port of call

Where the wines are like amber
Or ruby-tinted—
Tom, Tom the Rambler
Never stinted
His friends—he would lord it
Till maybe a week went—
If he could afford it,
Which wasn't frequent—
In song and swigging
And spotting winners
To fiddles jigging.
And he likes his dinners:
Lobsters, fat pullets,
Plum duff and green cheeses,
And sweet red mullets.
He does as he pleases,
Owning no master
Nor any nation
But old England, blast her!
In his own fashion:
Where, should fortune
Never heed him,
Tom'll importune
Till gentry feed him;
And he steering
By farm and manor
In silver ear-ring
And blue bandana.
He's slept where the drip
Of laburnum bloom is,
Where never a ship
And no tavern room is

Within miles of him,
So far he's cruised.
But the soft wiles of him
Are better used
For coaxing damsels
Than little foxes,
And 'tis lace camisoles
And curl-pin boxes
That send him roving.
There's trouble brewing:
If he keeps on loving
It'll mean his ruin.
Now Moll, now Mary—
Says Tom, there's nothing in it:
If you lose a canary
You'll catch a linnet,
So what does it matter?
The sweet curses
Still sing and chatter.
He'll empty out purses
To buy his girls corals
And tarts filled with honey;
To patch up quarrels
He'll spend every penny—
Tho' he's got no morals
And will never have any.

Now, the second of these sailors he was well acquainted with
sail—
Good for Paddy Murphy he's been forty times in gaol!
Toorelaye, toorelaye, forty times and more—
Steam ships to hell! says he, I'm happier ashore.

Eyes blue as larkspur, face as red as cheese—
Good for Paddy Murphy he can swear in Japanese!
Hearts tattoo'd upon his hands, round his wrist a snake—
Where's the rum, cries Paddy Murphy, for Saint Pathrick's sake!

Where's the rum? cries Paddy Murphy—tum-ti tiddle-tum—
Keep the banjo going, but blaze it! where's the rum?
If so be you're off the liquor, why, then, pretend—
Take my advice and be Paddy Murphy's friend!

Toorelaye bullario! but that is only right—
There's nothing Paddy more enjoys than a howling fight:
Except to dance and sing and drink and tell alarming tales
Of ancient days when mariners sailed round the world with sails.

## PADDY MURPHY: EPITAPH IN ADVANCE

At Fiddlers' Green, below the turf, he
Lies at rest, old Paddy Murphy:
Out of date—let's leave his praises
To the seabirds and the daisies.

Now, the third of these mariners that to this tavern hied
For to while away the time before they took and died—
The third of them was young and slim and dark and so bonnie
That all the girls would sigh for him with Oh Johnnie Johnnie!

Oh Johnnie come away and Oh Johnnie do!
  Oh Johnnie marry me and I'll be true to you!
Settle down and buy a farm and make a garden grow—
  Oh Johnnie, Johnnie Johnnie, oh Johnnie oh!

But he would only hitch his trousers up—and so be gone
  Out across the waters where other stars shone,
Or to find a cool tavern, there to sit and sing
  Toorelaye, toorelaye, as on this evening.

For Johnnie was a fisher from the Hebridean shore—
  Sorrow of the seafarer is his for evermore!
Out beyond the rowan-trees, down the shining coast;
  And they had made this island ballad, deeming Johnnie lost.

## JOHNNIE OF THE "SILVER FEATHER"

Who has seen the *Silver Feather*
  Flying in across the foam,
Thro' the isles where thyme and heather
  Flower sweet as honeycomb—
Who has seen the *Silver Feather*
  That should bring young Johnnie home?

Oh, he sailed away this morning—
  Never more the land he'd plough!
Laughing at the cloudy warning
  Over black Ben Eilan's brow:
White he spread his sail this morning,
  And 'tis emerald evening now.

The boats, they leave the sea-washed island
For their land-locked harbour bound,
Wafting in to sheltered Highland
Wood and field and garden-ground:
Aye, they leave their sea-washed island
Long ere dusk for Moyra Sound.

*Sea-mew*, *White Sea-hawk* and *Raven*,
All the fleet at evening swings
Quietly in this western haven,
Murmuring at their mooring-rings:
*Tern* and *Solan Goose* and *Raven*
Where the moorland curlew sings.

All the fishing fleet save only
One that dips her lug-s'ls far
Out beyond the darkened, lonely
Islands where the grey seals are:
Where the tide-race mourns him only
That has sought the sunset star.

Who has seen the *Silver Feather*
Flying in across the sea
Thro' the isles where thyme and heather
Flower for the honey-bee?
Who has seen the *Silver Feather*—
Johnnie, Johnnie, where is he?

Tum-ti tiddle tum-ti tiddle, plink-a-plonk, pling!
Tom the Rambler's off again, for time's on the wing,
And Paddy Murphy's dancing with the landlord's daughter—
Come and drown your sorrows in the tavern by the water!

Toorelaye, toorelaye, or stay away and sneer!
  Life's a little toddle 'twixt a cot and a bier,
And what's the truth of anything and who are I and you
  But two little bantams crying cock-a-doodle doo!

Toorelaye bullario—so pass the punch along!
  Sweet with cloves and curaçao, red, hot, and strong:
'Tis a magic liquor, 'tis a remedy for all
  The sorry affectations that a mortal befall.

So they come a-rolling, to hear the music played:
  Enter three more mariners along of each a maid—
Lovely Pol Maria Loo in purple feathers crowned:
  Enter singing seafarer from Carolina bound.

And they danced the mazurka, and they danced a-ring-a-ring,
  And Paddy danced an Irish jig and Johnnie the Highland
    fling,
And Tom danced the hornpipe and then they went in pairs
  And danced to the syncopated music-hall airs!

Softly when the sun shines, madly when the moon—
  Let us sing the praises of the tiddly-bang tune!
Tea for tum-ti tootsie tiddle tum-ti tiddle two—
  I want to be happy but I'm feeling blue!

Toorelaye a-lady! then hark to the Man of Sails
  Spinning yarns of balancelles and lion-foaming gales
And maidens of the green seas whose snowdrop-white arms
  Lure the silly sailors from far inland farms.

Keep the banjo going and the liquor flowing free!
  'Tis the young golden barmaid has got on Johnnie's knee

And sweet pretty Polly of the ultra-crimson lips
  Is daintily partaking of a bag of fish and chips!

Oh the man from Carolina has a temporary love—
  Tom, Tom the Rambler, what are you a-doing of?
Tum-ti tiddle tum-ti tiddle, plink-a-plonk, plack!
  Tom can play the banjo with one hand behind a back!

With toorelaye the mariners that to a tavern hied!
  For singing, and dancing, before they took and died—
And those that don't approve of them will kindly keep away—
  Ohé bullario, bullario, balay!

# PART II

## SEA LYRICS: FIRST SERIES

## YANGTSE RIVER SHANTY

*(Words for one more old bold out-of-date air)*

O I'll never see my lotus lady more,
Away boys, walk away together!
Since I left her by the shore, the China shore,
*Thrice* again for luck and better weather!
Sweetest river flower, my Yangtse honey,
Walk away boys, walk away!
She was my own good girl, she took my money,
Away boys, lift and walk away!

She spent my shining dollars like a queen,
Away boys, walk away together!
Her eye 'twas blacker than was ever seen,
*Twice* again for luck and better weather!
Sure I blowed my silver fortune for to win her,
Walk away boys, walk away!
And now there's nothing left but pork for dinner,
Away boys, lift and walk away!

To my beauty I bequeathed a golden comb,
Away boys, walk away together!
But trouble's over now the anchor's home.
*Once* again for luck and better weather!
We're bound afar and cookie's in the galley,
Walk away boys, walk away!
Fare thee well, young moon of all the Yangtse valley,
Away boys, lift and walk away!

## BALLAD OF JENNY DAVIS

Will you take the road from Bristol now with me, Jenny Davis?
'Tis I that have been thinking all the way from Finisterre
Of your lips as ripe as cherry plums, your eyes like pansies,
And the burning copper sunrise of your hair.

Will I take the road from Bristol now with you, Man of the Seaways
Sure, what would I be doing of, a-running mad and wild?
You can keep your Spanish flatteries, your honey-words, and use them
On some other ear that's likelier beguiled.

Well, but listen, Jenny Davis now, I'll cross my heart and swear it,
'Tis never a lass I looked upon since last I passed your door;
And here is a ring, a silver ring, and if you'll take and wear it
You'll not have cause to rue the bargain more.

Man, pocket your silver rings then, keep your shining moonstones,
They're little use to one that knows how soon their charm's forgot,
For it's every lass in Somerset would have them off my finger
And slip them on her own as like as not.

Will you listen now a minute while I speak, Jenny Davis?
I never heard such idle talk this many a wasted year:
For how can you bide in Bristol on this blue May morning
When the brier rose is out by Porlock Weir?

Lord, if that's your finest argument, be gone, Man of the Seaways!
And let me get my washing in from off the lilac-tree.
A thousand crimson roses wouldn't stir me . . . wouldn't stir me—
Where did you say you're bound for, Man of the Sea?

You to ask me, Jenny Davis, that knows as sure as I know!
It's over the Mendip hilltops into Glastonbury Town—
And all along the water where the birds are we'd wander,
And all along the water till we'd come to Brendon Down.

So that's it, Man of the Seaways—sure a fine affair it sounds then,
You and your minstrel fol-de-rols, and why should I heed them at all
When the mignonette is flowering in my own father's garden
And the jasmine growing up his garden wall?

Would you sit in your father's garden till you're grey then Jenny Davis?
Nor ever hear the cuckoo sing, nor smell sweet alyssum?
Ah, 'tis I would teach you many a thing you'd not learn in Bristol—
Will you come, Jenny darling, will you come?

## A HOUSE BY THE WATER AND PEACOCKS ON THE GRASS

O a lady in Pennsylvania, lovely Nancy, you'll be!—
Sweet my lady blow away and blow away!
There never was a lady so fair upon the sea—

Then away to Pennsylvania, away love with me!
Sweet my lady blow away!

O a gold ring in Pennsylvania lovely Nancy you'll find—
Sweet my lady blow away and blow away!
There never was a lady so lovely and kind:
Then away to Pennsylvania, away with the wind—
Sweet my lady blow away!

For a lady in Pennsylvania lovely Nancy you'll pass!
Sweet my lady blow away and blow away!
With a house by the water and peacocks on the grass—
O we'll drink to Pennsylvania—landlord, fill up the glass!
Sweet my lady blow away!

## TOM'S BALLAD OF COLLEENS

If all the young maidens were blackbirds and thrushes—
Sing merry, sing merry, now fly not away!
I'd find me a garden of green flowering bushes
Where all the young maidens might nest them in May;
With lilac and cherry
And autumn's red berry
And oh, we'll sing merry at dawning of day!

If all the young maidens were birds in my spinneys—
Sing clearly, sing clearly, now fly not from me!
Not a thrush would I part with for ten golden guineas
Nor barter a blackbird for pearls of the sea;
I'd love them so dearly,
So late and so early,
And oh, we'll sing clearly from every tall tree!

## BLUEBONNET SONG OF THE AMERICAS

We have come into a valley of sweet music.
We have travelled over the mountains a long way.

We were weary of the sea.
The ever-burdened sea, rolling its sorrowful billows on the Pacific shore—
We were weary of it.

Like sheep-bells in the twilight we heard them calling to us,
Across the plains, across the dark pastures and the water;
Wyoming, Oklahoma, Ohio,
Missouri, Minnesota—
The shining Americas!

Let us go, we said, and left the ships
And wandered here, bringing our young girls from the coast-lands.

We came down thro' the pine-forests
In the country of honey-bears and cloud-swinging eagles:
We robbed the honey-robbers,
Leaving them only the young sweet bees to crunch:
We took their gold combs,
Milk-white eggs of the pigeons: in our copper wine-cups
We drank the bitter juices of wild plum and cherry
Among the high woods of the mountains:
Till in the evening we rose over sky-ridges and looked on our valley.

We will go down there, we said.
And we came down treading ox-eye daisies in the moonshine
When whip-poor-wills were calling.
Ohio, Wyoming, Oklahoma,
Minnesota, Missouri.

Now we have found peace.
Our white stallions graze in deep grasses by the glittering mercury-pools.
We have built our houses of sweet walnut wood, with dropping eaves.
We have made our homes in the bluebonnet meadows.

No voice of the unresting sea is with us now,
No bugle-rally.
We will not go away any more out of our valley.

## BALLAD OF THE "AGAMEMNON"

Where is Henry Adams now, that planned the *Agamemnon?*
Sink him in his hammock boys, he's gone far away!
Oak and iron and blood of her, his fine one, his darling,
Foundered in the River Plate, in Maldonaldos Bay.

Where are all the shipwrights now that built the *Agamemnon?*
Let them lie at rest boys, under the green grass.
Saw and swinging riveters we'll never more be hearing
On Beaulieu's woodland waters where the *Agamemnon* was.

Where is Captain Nelson now, that sailed the *Agamemnon?*
Fought and beat the Spanish crews in Cape St. Vincent Bay—
Oak and iron and blood of her, his fine one, his darling—
Sink him in his hammock boys; he's gone far away!

## GIRLS' SONGS FOR SEAFARERS

### I

Furl, seafarers, furl your sails,
No more tempt the clouded seas:
Make not gulls your nightingales
Nor tall masts your cherry-trees.

Trust no song the siren sings,
Softly sounding from afar;
Sailors, fold your wind-blown wings
And rest where the true voices are.

Ah, be done, you'll find no lands
So honey-sweet, so fair in flocks—
Only the tides, and sinking sands
And sorrow brooding on the rocks.

### II

Unless you leave the sea, Johnnie, unless you leave the ships,
You'll come no more a-courting, for I'll not have your lips.
No, I'll not have your kisses, and I'll not be your bride
And I'll walk no more with you, Johnnie, at the turn of the tide.

For my father, he was a seafarer, the same Johnnie as you,
And he lies at the sea bottom now, he and all his crew—
And would you have me waking, in the grey of the dawn,
With you on the wild waves, Johnnie, and your lass forlorn?

Ah, well I know you seafarers, the way you will roam
Light-hearted and singing on the white crest of the foam,
Light-hearted and thoughtless as the hollow pearly shells,
And your women-folk mournful as the deep-sea bells.

You'd be gone south with the swallows, with your toppling spars,
To the warm shores low-lapping and the silvery stars:
And how would I be knowing if you lay not with me?
Oh I'd liefer the fishes claimed you and the cruel wild sea!

So the sooner you learn the plough Johnnie, and how to reap a field,
The sooner you plant an apple-tree, the sooner I'll yield.
Let you take the rook for the gull Johnnie, and a spade in your hand
And build you a small cottage in the curve of the land.

Aye, make you a green garden where the robin will nest—
'Tis the white bird of the foam would have his beak into my breast:
And a window of yellow jasmine in place of your flooding hatch
And under your foot the stone Johnnie, and over your head the thatch.

For unless you leave the sea, Johnnie, unless you leave the ships,
You'll come no more a-courting, for I'll not have your lips.
No, I'll not have your kisses and I'll not be your bride,
And I'll walk no more with you, Johnnie, at the turn of the tide.

III

I will knit him a foam-white jersey,
Soft as the breast of the mew;
Or, if he prefers, he
May have it of deep-sea blue.

I will knit him stockings of crimson
Soft as the fall of flowers,
Of the colour that dims on
The islands in evening hours.

And I will knit him a bonnet
Soft as the breast of the dove,
With tassel-bobs on it—
Oh, my laddie, my love!

## SONG OF THE BROWN SEA RAT

Now we are the rodent mariners,
As nobody needs be told,
For there's no mistaking our nautical airs,
Our rolling eyes and bold;
And 'tis never a ship leaves English ground

From Liverpool Docks to Plymouth Sound,
For San Francisco or Bombay bound,
  But we have the run of her hold.

With a pit-a-pit pat
  And a chip chip chip,
'Tis the brown sea rat
  That is captain of the ship!

We go aboard in companies,
  Marching at dead of night
Over the hawsers from the quays
  By starlight and lamplight:
Each roving rat his ship will choose,
From nose to nose we pass the news
Of cargoes, destination, crews,
  And naught can us affright.

With a churr churr a-churr
  And a quee quee quee,
'Tis the rodent mariner
  That is lord of the sea!

Was ever king as sea rat rich?
  Each vessel leaving land
A wandering larder is, in which
  Lie feasts on every hand:
Maize, apples, salmon, barley, rice,
Nutmegs, beans, olives, South Sea spice,
Meats, cheeses, India merchandise,
  And all at our command!

With a ho ho ho
  And a ho once again,
Whatever winds may blow,
  We are masters of the main!

We know the ports of all the world.
  All warehouses, all quays,
All islets coral-ringed and pearled,
  The blue Hesperides:
And men may search until they die,
And men may blow great fleets sky-high—
But we alone can hold for aye
  The Freedom of the Seas!

With a pit-a-pit pat
  And a chip chip chip,
'Tis the brown sea rat
  That is captain of the ship.

With a churr churr a-churr
  And a quee quee quee,
'Tis the rodent mariner
  That is lord of the sea.

With a ho ho ho
  And a ho once again,
Whatever winds may blow,
  We are masters of the main!

# PART III

# THE PEDLAR

Now to the tavern a pedlar, who'd heard the racket,
Steps hopefully in: neat-rigged in a plum-coloured jacket.
On his arm sits a parrot; and, giving good evening all round,
He lowers his pack and spreads its contents on the ground.

Sirs, attention! cries he, and ladies, look you!
Here's steel knives for waistbelts, and corkscrews, and pans for to cook you
Fat gooses, the red-spotted plaice; here's ribbons, silks, cotton—
Shining like the rainbow—good people, there's naught I've forgotten!

Here's thimbles, I say, oval mirrors and tortoiseshell pins,
Satinwood boxes, arrows, and javelins—
Love's messengers: rose-scents bottled and sealed in crystal.
Ah, what a pedlar you see! Not from London to Bristol—

No, nor I'll warrant, from Lisbon to Pondicherry—
Would you find a pedlar so cheap and withal one so merry!
Here's peacocks' quill pens, Highland bonnets, and soft Persian shoes—
Sirs, ladies, what do you choose?

'Tis a cunning pedlar indeed, nor none awarer
Of how to work wonders, like a fiddle, on the kind seafarer,
That loves nothing so much as to grant his girl her wish
From merchandise laid upon the floor as tarts in a dish.

Sure, 'tis rare delights truly, cries Tom, if the price be not crushing—
Which would account for this parrot so marvellously blushing—

But first, Mr. Pedlar sir, let you be merry, and give us
Some songs of the road as we drink you good health to revive us.

'Tis pleasure indeed! cries the pedlar. Was I not this minute
About to unfasten my satchel, that has within it
Sweet songs of my own composition?—including some verses
In which, as you'll see, I have made out a strong case against nurses.

## PEDLAR'S SONG IN SPRING

Lady, lady, most beautiful,
Will you buy a skein of crimson wool?
Will you buy a ball of polished glass
For to see the year pass, the year pass?
Out of this pack I will sell you anything
From a crown thing to a penny thing.
Why do you sigh wearily,
Lady, sweet lady?

My love's love will you sell me—
Pedlar pedlar tell me!

Lady, lady, most fair of all,
I will sell you this polished glass ball:
Look into it and you will see your love,
Whether he constant or inconstant prove.
Out of this pack I will sell you any goods
From the town shop to the bluebell woods.
Will you not buy from me,
Lady, sweet lady?

My love's love only spare me,
Pedlar pedlar swear me!

Lady, lady, most like a rose,
I will sell you parrots, redpolls, and jet-black crows
That will say "Kiss me," and puppies too
That will love you better than men do.
Out of this pack I can conjure any toy
To make even the saddest laugh with joy.
What would you care to see,
Lady, sweet lady?

My love's heart I would know me,
Pedlar pedlar show me!

Lady, lady, most rare to see,
Will you buy a charm against love's perfidy?
I will sell you opals and beryl brooches
For to scare old age when he approaches.
Out of this pack I will sell you anything
From a crown thing to a penny thing.
Why do you sigh wearily,
Lady, sweet lady?

Pedlar pedlar tell me,
My love's love will you sell me?

## WAYFARER'S THORN

Of all the trees, in every land,
From Forest Flame to snowy pine,
'Tis I will keep, for heart and hand,
The hawthorn and the blackthorn mine;

Of all the trees that I have known
  On every road however long.
For hawthorn flower is memory's own
  And blackthorn boughs as faith are strong.

O never a tree but fairly grows!
  Slight birch, the lady of the woods,
And oak, and ash, and sweet wild rose,
  And cypress in starlit solitudes:
Laburnum and lilac, cherry, larch,
  Red rowans in the hills of home,
Slim sallow wands that flower in March,
  And ilex by the salt sea foam.

Aye, elm and apple, and beechen dales,
  Dim silvery firs by silent seas—
But still shall rove Time's nightingales
  Thro' hawthorn-trees and blackthorn-trees;
And holier yet, in music's wake,
  As holly's lamps when autumn ends,
Sweet hawthorn blooms for sorrow's sake
  And blackthorn boughs are pilgrims' friends.

In hawthorn red by upland ways,
  Or white as cloud in evening dells,
I will keep lovely all my days
  The magic hours that need no bells;
And when the hawthorn spills its load
  Of stars too bright to let me rest,
I'll cut a stick, and take the road,
  And walk into the crimson west.

I pray you, all
  You tiny things
That creep and crawl
  And flit on wings,

That flute and hum,
  In satins drest:
Think not I come
  But as your guest

You grasshoppers
  Whose song is heard
On evening airs:
  You ladybird

In crimson blouse,
  Fly not, nor fret:
Unless your house
  Is burning yet.

You silvery shrews,
  Seek not your holes:
What news, what news,
  You velvet voles?

Nay, fear him not
  Who would find out
Your ways, and what
  You think about.

Sweet Jenny Wren,
  Where will you flit
At evening when
  The stars are lit?

Flute, atom! Tell
  How you employ
Star-hours—as well,
  Green frog, ahoy!

You secret bats
  That haunt old oaks,
In hooded hats
  And russet cloaks:

Laborious ants
  That seem so wise,
What are *your* wants?
  And all you flies,

In falling dews,
  On flowery downs,
Adonis blues
  And meadow browns?

You whorlèd snails
  And shells of the sea—
What tales, what tales
  Have you for me?

All watery forms,
  Newts, gnats untold,

And dim land-worms
  With lamps of gold:

All bees: all moths
  On silver wings,
Mystic as Goths
  And crowned like kings,

Monk-moths in cowls
  Whose chant ascends:
You smallë fowles,
  Dan Chaucer's friends

On twig, in air,
  Pipe, chirrup, crow—
That I may share
  Your dreams, and know

Your wisdom's pearls,
  Your dancing joys—
Like tiny girls,
  Like tiny boys.

## PEDLAR'S SONG AGAINST NURSES

Times, in summer by-ways strolling
  Where all idle flowers grow
I have passed by thin-lipped nursemaids
  Whispering to their charges, so:

Walk not near this man—a lady
  Lets all idle pedlars pass.

What he tells you, child, is jade, he
  Knows is naught but painted glass:
Tinfoil all his silver watches,
  All his golden rings are brass.

Child, be sure and never get you
  Nigh to these wanderers' tapping crooks.
They will smile at you, and let you
  Think them kings from fairy books:
Walk not near this worthless creature,
  He is wilier than he looks.

Hark to her, I say, this meddler,
  Spoiling trade in deeps of June!
But my pretty one cries, Pedlar,
  I will have a blue balloon!
Sure, and half my heart goes with it—
  If 'twere mine, she'd have the moon!

## PEDLAR'S SONG IN AUTUMN

Ah, 'tis well enough roving in a world of summer skies!
  A pedlar might be merry then, and not be sore at heart,
With gold and silver trinkets for to match with laughing eyes,
  And a little grey donkey and a high-wheeled cart.

A pedlar might be merry then, aye, sure, as I have been,
  A-questing down the country when hills are starred with
    flowers,
And all the woodlands singing, and all the meadows green
  And never a lamplit window for to haunt his evening hours.

For then he'd walk with Wonder, but now 'tis Sorrow old,
A far faint voice that follows him, that goes with him along
And mocks him on the hillside, and in the valleys' gold,
And sweet in roadside gardens filled with autumn robin-song.

'Tis all but him have dwellings, over all the shires,
Over all of England, from sea to misty sea,
And men will come at twilight to their own hearth's fires,
And mice will build their winter nests beneath the wild rose tree.

Aye, 'tis well enough roving when the land is bright!
A pedlar might be merry then, before the swallow's flown:
With never a lamplit window for to haunt him thro' the night—
And he and his little donkey on the dark road alone.

## PEDLAR'S SECRET STORE

I deal in shadows, I deal in dews!
In watery clouds, in chimes that ring
Old idle airs in churchyard yews,
I bring you nothing, and everything!

I bring you smoke of apple-logs,
Song of red leaves that whirl and patter,
The gold that lies in pewter mugs,
The silver charm of swallow-chatter.

I have the keys to all inn-doors
Away and across this flowery land:

The Lions Red and Blue, the Boars,
The Goat in Boots, the Bird in Hand.

Listen! each river's own cool sound
Is mine, is mine—Green Avon's lays,
Teme's fluting in the moorland ground,
Wye's bells among the rose-red mays!

I deal in lark-song, scent of whin,
In hamlet-names—here's Honeycoombe,
St. Helen Without and St. Helen Within,
And Harwell of the Cherry Bloom.

I deal in breezes, I deal in views—
Good sirs, within this secret store
I carry rainbows, stars and dews!
What more do you ask, what more?

"That's all!" cries the parrot; yet not without observing a pause
For effect—'twas an excellent trick—then applause, what applause!
"What a minstrel!" "What a thrush!" "A magician!"—
Cries the pedlar, in a whirl,
"Good sirs, come choose, come choose, each sailor for his girl!"

Then—"Twelve pairs of stockings!" cries Tom, "and a rabbit-fur collar!
Seven dollar down for the lot—someone loan me seven dollar!
And a ruby-studded bangle, and a comb, and a yellow singing-bird!"

" 'Tis a pleasure!" cries the pedlar, " 'tis a pleasure, I give you my word!"

So, with Tom the Rambler to the fore, that seldom could hold
From laying in wealth of sweet bribes against love that grows cold—
Johnnie'll have a clock, and Paddy he will have a shoe-shiner,
And the man from Carolina a locket for his love in Carolina.

Luck-jewels for Loo, for Maria some hook-me-dinghy[1] lace—
Which is so cheap, she declares such a gift a disgrace—
And sweet pretty Polly, in addition to her own chap's neck-lace,
Is stealthily presented with a locket—Tom the Rambler's getting reckless.

" 'Tis a fine girl for sure, a beauty, plump, sweet, golden-skinned,
And saucy: I wonder [thinks he] how close-up in the wind . . ."
"More! More!" screams the parrot, in a frenzy from atop the pedlar's shoulder—
"Quick, loan me five dollar!" cries the Rambler, in fancy growing bolder.

And away they go again, with a-scrambling and a-choosing and a-buying,
And a-squeezing all the sweetness from the hour while time's still flying:

[1] A term used by sailors to signify anything of whose proper name they are not certain.

Till half the pedlar's merchandise is sold, and so much money spent,
That the pedlar, and his patrons, and even poll parrot, are content.

Then, "Ladies, I am honoured, and sirs, most respectfully to you
I tender my assurance of goodwill on all occasions: adieu"—
And, sudden as his coming, that traveller in bright alluring things
Steps back into the night . . . and Tom he plucks his banjo strings.

# PART IV

## SEA LYRICS: SECOND SERIES

## LISTEN, SAILOR!

Listen, sailor, listen! Who is this that calls
In the shadowed nutmeg island, under the blue walls
Of these Moluccan mountains, where the crimson parrot flies?
Listen sailor, listen sailor . . . who is this that cries?

Apple-green the water is, over the coral tops,
And the sand is silver where the anchor drops,
And fish like sapphire arrows and bright as tangerines
Float down in the olive- and the apple-greens.

Our ship has come for copra and shining pearls,
Nutmegs red in the husk as the mouths of island girls:
Sweet-scented spice-groves that stand along the shore
Of Ternatë, and Tawali, and Tidor.

Aye, and we have found them, we have filled our hold
With the stuff of rainbows that is more than gold,
In the violet evening and the morning seas
Of the soft Moluccas and the Celebes.

But we have yet one isle to find, and when the morning star
Sinks down low and shakes her silver wings on Macassar,
We will weigh our anchor and westward turn our prow—
Listen sailor, listen sailor! Who is singing now?

## THE KEY

A stranger came out of the west,
And there swung at his belt a key.
"It will open some door in the world," he said.
"It must," said he.

"A mort of days have I travelled,
And even my soul is sore,
But nobody'd mould a key, surely,
That hadn't a door?

"Mayhap it's a door of gold,
With a king's palace beyond,
And water-lilies and white birds
On a beautiful pond.

"Or mayhap the door to a wood,
To some wild, lonely place
Where you'd hear Pan piping at dawn—who knows?
Even glimpse his face.

"Who knows?—Oh, I've journeyed far,
I've known strange isles of the sea;
But nobody'd build a lock, surely,
That hadn't a key?

"Ah, times I have wished it might fit
In a little house among hills;
With the rooks flying above, and a plough,
And daffodils."

The stranger shouldered his pack,
And the key glittered and shone.
"There must be a door for it somewhere," he said,
As he wandered on.

## IN THE SPRING, AND IN SEPTEMBER

In the dreary morning, when
Every wave is capped with foam,
Seafarers remember then
Pansies in the garden loam.

When beneath the silver Plough
Blow the clouds, half-hiding it,
Seafarers remember how
Lamps in village inns are lit.

In the spring, and in September,
When the white-throat swallows pass,
Mariners, looking up, remember
The sweet waves of upland grass.

## SAILOR AND INLAND FLOWER. I.

The stars never had any mystery for me:
In the soft midnight, in the Indian Sea,
I had simply to level my sextant at Arcturus's eye
And he had to tell me where I was; he dared not lie.

I had simply to level my sextant and wonder, "To-night
Where am I, Arcturus, Arcturus bright?"
And he would twirl his silver whiskers and then say:
"You are exactly seventeen hours' steaming from Bombay."
Orion, the Lion, the Crab, and Betelgeuse,
They were all as friendly as farm-hands in the *Fox and Goose.*

But these unwinking wood anemones
That make a Milky Way beneath the trees
Are nothing but secrecies.

They simply shine there, and keep
Themselves in eternal haughtiness and half-sleep,
And I might be in Atlantis, or any haunted place
Out of time and space.

## SAILOR AND INLAND FLOWER. II.

Into a little ash-wood of England,
Where a robin was tuning his May-time piccolo,
In the Chiltern land, the Tring land
I saw the violet waters of California flow;
In waves lapping the ash-poles, ringing sea-filled bells,
Making rock-pools at evening of the little ash-dells.

## SHELLS AT THE PLOUGH

These winding shells
  In the nameless ground
Sing sailors' knells
  Who long were drowned.

## LITTLE SEA HOUSE

Little sea house,
  When I found you,
The yellow poppies
  Were nodding round you.

Your blue slate hat
  That the four winds
Came to tug at
  Over the tamarinds:

I remember it well:
  The salmon nets drying—
Laugh, violin-shell,
  And cease crying!

For I will return
  Through the sea-haze:
I am sailing back there
  Always, always.

## HARP IN THE RIGGING

There is a harp set above us
In the wind between our moving masts:
The north wind
Flies into it silver-fingered,
The west wind sweeps
Over and over it sounding deep-toned bells:
The stars
Look down and brush it with their gold eyelashes.
Our harp is never silent.

## ISLAND ROSE

She has given all her beauty to the water,
She has told her secrets to the tidal bell,

And her hair is a moon-drawn net, and it has caught her,
And her voice is in the hollow shell.

She will not come back any more now, nor waken
Out of her island dream where no wind blows;
And only in the small house of the shell, forsaken,
Sings the dark one whose face is a rose.

## MORNING SONG OF THE MACKEREL FISHERS

In the morning early,
When love lies spent,
We shall find new, pearly
Shapes for our content.

When bird-bells are ringing
Night's curtain up,
Then we shall be singing
On the green tide-top.

Our shining fish-nets throwing
Fold on soft fold—
But you will be owing
Silver, or even gold.

## THE FLYING FISHES

(*For a Sailor Drowned*)

In flight of silvery arrows
That no hand might keep,
The flying fishes rise from the violet water
Where he lies down deep.

Fly, fishes, fly in the gleam and splendour!
He too must know
The bright oblivion of some new lovely starshine
Where he lies down low.

## THE DOLPHINS

As threads spilling dew-drops
On rose-trees where the spider spins,
So weave through the wave-tops
Dolphins, dolphins.

Strike bubbles in the blue glass,
Wind out invisible balls;
No ship ever shall pass
Your silver trawls.

Spin into the red west,
Slip through the crystal floes,
For how should you ever rest,
Sea-spinners of woes?

Ebony half-moons that soar
From pools where the half-light begins,
To set when on what far shore,
Dolphins, dolphins?

## THE OLD SAILORS. I.

We will find a small harbour
For our old ship at last
Where no winds shall disturb her,

And we will make her fast
To a post that is sunken
In the blue clay deep;
Like an aged, drunken
Tramp asleep,
She will lie in that tidal
Water, and we
Will be mostly idle
And wholly free—
As sea-gull or gannet:
Our capstan still
Rigged, should any man it,
But no one will.
And when, in the gold morning,
Some ghost-piper cries
His show-a-leg warning,
We will just blink our eyes
At the pale low sun
And murmur drow-
Sily to that bo'sun,
Not now, not now.
Our songs will be old songs,
For we would rather
Sing often-told songs:
And when we gather
Mussels for stewing,
Or net the gliding fins,
The sea-birds, mewing,
Will be our violins.
We will not hanker
After anything new,
So quiet at anchor:

The far and blue
Will be no more to us
Then at all
Than our own shore to us,
Our own sea-wall.
Anemone glasses,
Round and green-glowing,
The wind that passes
And the ebbing and flowing
Of tidal streams—
Only these, only
These, and our dreams.
We will not be lonely.

## THE OLD SAILORS. II.
## THE YARN-SPINNER

There came an old sailor
With a dog going behind,
And he was tapping the road with a stick,
And he was blind.

And he came to my house,
But he didn't want bread;
No, he didn't want anything,
But he nodded, and said:

Who is it living here, mate,
In this house by the water?
Is it maybe a man of the ships,
Or his wife or daughter?

Is it one that would listen
For it might be an hour,
Here where I can smell the lobster-pots
And the jessamine-flower?

And he sat down, the old sailor,
With the dog he called Bess,
At my door, questioning with his blind grey eyes,
And I answered him, Yes.

So he thanked me in his courteous manner,
And stared into the bright
Morning, as tho' its daffodil torches
Should give him light.

But he had no more story
Than the mountain-girls have
That come with their wild strawberry baskets
And Madonna-like, grave

Looks, to talk with the traveller:
Like a small child he was;
And he didn't ask of me anything
But to sit on the grass,

And remembering old marvels,
Talk, for maybe an hour,
There where he could smell the lobster-pots
And the jessamine-flower.

Once, once in Barcelona,
Once in far Amoy . . .

Ah, 'twas a merry world then, mate,
When I was a boy.

And he spoke of rare cargoes,
Tulip-wood and silver ore;
And thrushes flying among the apricot groves—
No more, mate, no more

Will I see the red star shining,
But it dwells in my mind,
And my friends are all gone away from me now, mate,
But a dog going behind.

And then he went from my house,
To be easing his heart's pain
With telling, in his courteous manner, the old marvels
Again and again. . . .

## THE FOOLISH OLD SAILOR WHO SETTLED INLAND

To-morrow I'll up, at red of morning,
  Shoulder my traps, and leave behind
Everything here that I cannot carry,
  And when I am gone, no one will mind.

No one will grieve for my house deserted,
  I least of all, that am hearing now
The gulls calling on starry journeys
  Seaward, seaward—I care not how

Or where, in the end, I'd come to water,
The sounding shingle, the breathing sea;
Only I tell myself, over and over,
This little house is no use to me.

This little house is no use whatever—
And I that should still have fast in my hand
Forty guineas in gold and silver—
Forty! lost on a house inland.

And none comes buying, and I thinking
Night and noon on the blowing spray:
Let the first stranger I meet on the high road
To-morrow morning give what he may.

I'll wait no longer: I hear the ship-bells
Sounding in dreams, and I see the sand,
The barnacled wherries, the cockle-baskets—
I'll wait no longer in this house inland.

But at red of morning I'll up, and shoulder
Everything easy from cupboard and shelf,
And maybe I'll meet with a man on the hill-crest
That would be glad of a house himself.

Aye, the wild peony blooms in the woodland,
Sweet pears hang on my garden wall—
If somebody'd pluck them, let him. I leave them
To any that wants them at all, at all.

## ARRIVAL

Now let the anchor find some long-sought hold
  In deep dim waters off this purple shore—
Come you, and firmly fold
  Salt-crusted sails away, that never more
Shall scud on stormy seas:
  For here are the Hebrides.

# PART V

# A FIGHT IN THE TAVERN

There were six mariners did in a tavern sigh,
Ohé, ohé, the time draws nigh—
The balefullest hour of the whole twenty-four,
Time gents, please gents, time to bar the door!

One more round then, one more song,
Tum-ti tiddle, hey diddle, plink-a-plink plong:
'Twould all have ended there then, in still melancholy,
If Tom he hadn't been and gone and kissed pretty Polly.

Now, if this hadn't happened—but it did, I declare,
And what's the use of making out that sailors don't care?
You be iddy-umptied, you to blank blank hell!
Up and cries the sailor that was Polly's swell.

Toorelaye-a-lady, the music's at an end!
Tom he shoves his banjo by and winks at his friend
Paddy, Paddy Murphy, that was spoiling for a scrap—
Iddy-umpty blank to you! says Tom to Polly's chap.

By crump! then cried that mariner, and spat upon his hand,
I'll be iddied, and be umptied, and be blanked if I'll stand
That from a blazing banjoist, full to the neck with booze!
Then up leaps Maria's chap and up leaps Loo's.

Knock the noodle over then, make the blighter quit!
Roll him in the sawdust till he chokes with it!
The young golden barmaid is off to fetch her Daddy,
And up leaps Johnnie now, and up leaps Paddy.

Hullabaloo, bullario, bullario—bum!
Down goes Polly's chap against a keg of rum.

The girls have started buzzing like a swarm of June bees.
Time! bawls the tavern-keeper, Time gents please!

But (for publication) there is only damn and blast,
For time has been arrested, although 'twas flying fast:
Tom the Rambler's twirling on the tips of his toes
And somebody dislikes the look of young Johnnie's nose!

Hear the kettle-drumming of a lunatic band!
Hear the breakers beating on a storm-bound strand!
Hear the tigers snarling at meal-time in the Zoo!
Six fighting mariners—bullario, baloo!

Then out came the loungers, the harbour-alley lurchers,
The wake-o'-nights, the town toughs, the What's-the-trouble? searchers,
The ship-bound mariners that should have been aboard,
Shouting, and hallo-ing, and passing round the word:

'Tis a fight in the tavern, the best you ever saw!
Bullario, bullario, break his blinking jaw,
Sock him in the belly then, land him one in the eye!
Hullabaloo, bullario, and God knows why!

'Tis a fight in the tavern, boys; roll along down!
Now then the little 'un, crack his crazy crown!
Trip 'im up and murder 'im, show what you can do—
Hullabaloo, bullario, bullario, baloo!

And down they all come bowling, and down they came stampeding
To the tavern by the water, nor anybody heeding

The landlord's wailing, like a wind in the trees,
  Time gents—come along, time gents please!

With a whirling, and a roaring, across the tavern floor,
  And who's fighting who now, and what they're fighting for,
Only Tom the Rambler, that began the row,
  Remembers, and remembering, considers now:

Time is flying, flying, and the moon swings over—
  Some must fight their ways along, others lie in clover:
Some must argue, toil and strive, others spend the money:
  Some gather kicks and blows, others gather honey.

And girls must keep a-roving and the moon swings down:
  Spilling showers of silver on the harbour town,
Casting airy fish-nets on the blue roof-tops—
  Tom's the first to vanish at the cry of "Cops!"

Toorelaye-a-lady, let's leave the strife behind—
  Tom has gone a-playing for his peace of mind
Out along the parapet of nodding sea-pinks,
  Where Polly might be stepping when her chap's in links.

## TOM THE RAMBLER'S LOVE-SONGS FOR FIVE OCCASIONS

### I. *Quest of Love*

This primrose girl, so shy and wan,
  Whose April passes never,
What are her charms, that every man
  Must follow her for ever?

She dwells not in the light of day;
All dreams are woven round her:
And who can say, and who can say,
That he has ever found her?

At blue dusk, the virgin star
Venus, shall be her token,
The sweet globes of whose body are
As lily-buds unbroken.

So cool she is, and innocent,
Yet still she's man's undoing.
Who would not go the way she went
To prosper such a wooing?

Oh, wanton, wanton winnowing!
Each lover thinks he's got her
Until she yields him everything,
And then he knows 'tis not her.

This primrose girl, so shy and wan,
Whose April passes never—
She comes not, yet every man
Goes seeking her for ever.

## II. *Persuading Song*

Beauty will pass like the flower of morning,
Like the apple-blossom that dies on the bough:
Therefore, lady, take warning,
And be not angry now.

Beauty will pass, beauty her own chalice spills,
Like the flowers, lady, like the daffodils
That close up to the bees, their honey done,
And no lover will come to you then, lovely one.

Aye, beauty will vanish even as the starling
Sings, mocking all songs from the elder-tree:
Therefore, lady—sweet, my darling,
Be not angry with me!
Beauty will vanish, beauty will fade and pass,
Like the rose, lady, like the rose in the grass
That droops and dies in the autumn, her bright day done,
And no lover will come to you then, lovely one.

### III. *Lament of Love*

Oh, I am weary, weary and worn,
The silver doves of song are flown;
The wine is drunk, and love is a thorn,
And I this night must lie alone.

Love is a pricking thorn, a dart
That enters into the heart and stings,
That pierces the unarmoured heart—
Love has no music, love has no wings.

Ah fool, fool! She keeps no vow;
She never did since she was born.
The rose has shed her petals now,
And there it stands, the naked thorn.

Oh, I am weary, weary and scarred.
The silver doves of song are flown;
The wine is drunk, and hell, 'tis hard
To think this night I lie alone!

## IV. *Sea-Shell Song of Triumph*

I will make a necklace for my love, my fair one,
Not of jade nor amber, nor starry stone,
But a moon-pale one, a rare one
Of whorlèd shells alone.

I will take sunset-shell and latticed spire-shell,
Lantern-shell, cowrie, and the shell in mail,
The lyre-shell, the little lyre-shell,
And the floating violet snail.

Shells of rose-leaf sculpture, of staircase and steeple,
The glassy bubble-shells that surely were
Blown by the mermaids, the sea-people,
Lustrous, and light as air.

Shells of the ocean-beaches, the poppied islands,
And where shrill redshanks haunt the golden dunes;
Shells of the ploughlands, the dry lands
That sing, that sing old tunes.

In the rainbow places where they lie, I will find them,
Spindles and painted tops and sentinels—
And pierce and thread them, and bind them
In ropes of shining shells!

I will make a necklace for my love, my fair one,
Not of jade nor amber, nor starry stone,
  But a moon-pale one, a rare one
Of whorlèd shells alone.

V. *To One That Passes, Scorning His Songs*

Pass, then, nor wait you,
  Poor haughty thing:
I shall not hate you,
  Nor cease to sing.

For I sing not in duty,
  Nor yet in lust
For a passing beauty
  Of dust, that will be dust.

But I sing in sorrow
  For things you know not of;
And because to-morrow
  Death will vanquish love.

And I sing merrily,
  Daring to be bold,
For, lady, verily,
  How soon shall hearts grow cold!

Tum-ti tirrel tool-tirrel, softly through the night
  Keep the music flowing on the waves of moonlight:
Love may follow early, or come not at all—
  Tom would play till morning on the flowered sea-wall.

For Tom has gone a-rambling, and who knows what he'll do?
But ohé, bullario, bullario, baloo!
The cops are in the tavern, and they're out for a coup:
Five bruised mariners, briefly, in the soup!

Five sorry mariners combined against the law:
Hullabaloo, bullario, break a copper's jaw!
Good for Paddy Murphy that's been forty times in gaol—
See his arms a-whirling like a threshing-flail!

The audience has flitted and the birds are flown,
A-roving, a-roving, again upon their own.
The young golden barmaid for Johnnie sore laments—
Time! cries the tavern-keeper; time please gents!

Lack-a-day a-lady, how soon the trick is done:
Five bruised mariners outnumbered three to one,
Five sorry mariners a-linkèd wrist to wrist—
Where's the blazing banjoist that pretty Polly kissed?

# PART VI

# INLAND LYRICS

## THE FOREST DWELLER

Secret, secret is my house,
Shared by bat and mouse:
Mossed and grown about with ferns
And flowers that come by turns.

The fox-glove, the purple bell,
I know its wonders well:
Forget-me-nots by forest streams
As things that haunt my dreams.

And O you brooding hawks, you doves,
Owls and crows—my loves,
Under the white moonlight tree,
Keep you close by me.

## THE RING-DOVES

The ring-doves in the April woods
Sit still as nuns in pearl-grey hoods,
Demure and plump: with folded wing
Aloof, aloft,—but when they sing,
The ring-doves in their larch-tree nests
Are choristers in rose-red vests.

Or they are lovers when, at morn
In silvery birch, in dells of thorn,
Or hid in the pear-tree's tumbling snow,
Ring-dove answers ring-dove low:
Mourners at eve, that haunt old shrines,
Lost voices in the purple pines.

## LENT LILY

When March winds waken
All the hollow land,
And the piper has taken
His new reed in his hand

To flute at sunrise
And at evening, till
Stars one by one rise
And shine over the hill:

And earth's are the bluebell
And the primrose pale—
Then at some new bell
That is heard in the gale,

One voice will answer,
But one will be mute:
And only one dancer
Will dance to Pan's flute.

Sweet, sweet by the river
Where that sorrow was,
In spring forever
All out of green grass,

So tall, and so chilly,
With dews by night shed,
The lenten lily
Will lift her lovely head:

As one who was dearest
And died long ago,
And still is fairest
Of all flowers that blow.

## WILLOW SONG

Willow wands, willow wands, here are coloured willow wands,
  Dipping by the river where the thrushes sing!
Purple willow, weeping willow,
  White willow, creeping willow,
Here are magic willow wands to conjure in the spring!

Willow wands, willow wands, here are pollard willow wands,
  Swaying by the water in the wind and rain!
Silver catkins, sallow catkins,
  Green catkins, yellow catkins,
Here are coloured willow catkins flowering again!

## THE LITTLE RED AND YELLOW COCKS

Listen! These little cockerels
That ring from hill to hill like bells,
In spring when violets sweeten the grass:
What they say will come to pass.

What do they say, what do they know?
This cock-a-lora-loral crow
Of little red and yellow cocks—
Is it aught but farmers' clocks,

Farmers' clocks and ploughmen's bells?
These little sunrise cockerels
Sing another song for one
That greets no more the gold of the sun.

But what they say none other hears
Till, at the close of numbered years
In the dark morning he too his
One will be born, and one will die
Still at their cock-a-loral cries.

## THE CUCKOO'S REFRAIN

There is only mockery in the cuckoo's song
That rings up faintly from the cherry now
Like a twin-tapping on muffled gong
To the grey farmstead where none is merry now.

In Aprils far away
I would hear the cuckoo and think, tomorrow now. . . .
But tomorrow has become yesterday
And hope has become sorrow now:
And when these mountain cherries flower again
There will be only dark prophesy in the cuckoo's refrain.

## WASP AND BEE,
## OR WHAT NOW, MORALIST?

From high endeavour
  On his bright wings,
The wasp is fallen
  To evil things.

From deep searching
  In honeyed cup,
The bee is flown
  Elsewhere to sup.

An apple dropped
  By a grey trunk:
A wasp witless
  And a bee drunk.

## PEACOCK BUTTERFLY

Toll on, cathedral bells—
  The world's yet full of weeping
And some take little else
  Than sorrow for their keeping.

Yet even now, in dry
  Rich dust beneath your knelling
A peacock butterfly
  Stirs in his winter dwelling.

## SONG OF THE FLOODED BROOK

Thro' the willows
  And thro' the meads,
With swirling branches
  And swaying weeds!

My silvery surface
  A-swim all with loot,
Here's primrose plant
  And marigold root!

Tree-trunks of the forest
  And wood of old mills—

The shadows of clouds
  And the shadows of hills!

You rose, you poppy,
  Now here is your chance
To rival Narcissus
  And watch yourselves dance!
And see how the fishes,
  The little blue trout,
Stickleback, minnow,
  Flash madly about!

The dragonfly's drowned,
  The snail is upset,
And the black mole has found
  His winter-nest wet.

A fig for them all!
  I'm bound for the sea,
With bobbing bulbs
  Clean swept from the lea!

## FALL

Then sighed the autumn rose
And soft I heard her muttering,
Her voice distracted
Her petals sadly fluttering.

She filled the world with woes,
The lawn with petals littering:
It's scarcely decent—
Said the birds, idly tittering.

## THE WINTER MOON

Last night in the wood
I met a witch:
She was up to no good.
She had gotten a flitch

And a fattened brood
Of the Christmas chicks:
Nuts, apples red
And a loaf of bread.
She mounted the wind,
Her hair streamed,
And the moon grinned
And hungrily beamed.

Yes, the moon gloated,
Spilling silver drops,
And gleefully floated
Thro' the pine-tree tops.

## THE PINES

Now in this forest blue
Let us be lost, come you
And where the pines begin,
Shed, like a snake his skin,
All troublous things, all vain
Sorrow and hate and pain.

And first, in this sundew dell,
Shatter the man-cast spell

Swiftly, remorselessly,
And then come free
Ancestral sins
Where the deep wood begins,
And the brier, the brier twines
Thro' dells of darkling pines.

Let us forget that we
Once had identity.
Why should we bear a name,
Or heed the way we came?
Burdened with knowledge and
Fastened by foot and hand—
Fastened to worthless things,
Desirous, without wings?
Now let such manacles
Be cast in these azure dells.

In here the bright gold-crests
Sing and build swinging nests
Over the haunted streams:
In here the hare-bell gleams,
Nods on enamelled lawns
Cropped by shy fallow fawns:
And pine-waters black and chilly
Are lit by the water-lily.

Let us forget that we
Once had identity:
And far in the forest blue
Find only I and you.

# NOTES TO POEMS

Note to *Yangtse River Shanty*

Strictly speaking, this type of song—from the shanty model—is, I suppose, now quite out of date; but personally I like to think that it has some life in it yet, and may note, in support of this whim, that I have myself helped to weigh anchor by hand, tramping round the capstan to music. If I might say so without appearing to flatter myself and insult another writer, it would have been better had we had a song like this to work to instead of Mr. Irving Berlin's latest. So far as I know, there is no authentic shanty using the words *lift and walk away* as a refrain; which is a mystery to me, since this is just what one does—i.e. lifts the capstan bars under one's arms and walks rhythmically round.

Note to *Tom's Ballad of Colleens*

I am indebted to two anonymous Irish writers for the first line of this ballad and of the one beginning "O a lady in Pennsylvania, lovely Nancy, you'll be." I found the lines in a book of old Irish airs and song-fragments, and felt compelled to complete the ballads; though doubtless the originals were quite otherwise, and, doubtless also, immeasurably finer.

Note to *Ballad of the "Agamemnon"*

In fact, having been lately promoted commodore, Nelson was flying his pennant on board the *Captain* when for half

an hour he took on single-handed half a Spanish armada. But it was, I believe, even then as the captain of the *Agamemnon* that he was best known, and, anyhow, I am certainly not going to wreck the old sailors' chorus for a trifling error like that.

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